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INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION MATTERS

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 15, 2007
Meeting Time: 10:30 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Greg Porter, Chairperson; Rep. Mara Candelaria-Reardon; Rep. Robert Behning; Rep. Timothy Harris; Rep. Jeff Thompson; Sen. Teresa Lubbers, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Ron Alting; Sen. Jeff Drozda; Sen. Connie Sipes.

Members Absent: Sen. Timothy Skinner; Sen. Richard Young; Rep. Paul Robertson.

Chairman Porter called the meeting to order at 10:46 A.M. The topic of the meeting was teacher recruitment and retention and the relevancy and value of creating incentive funds for teachers who attain national board certification.

The chairman called on Dr. Suellen Reed, Superintendent of Public Instruction. Dr. Reed presented a slide presentation (Exhibit A) entitled "Teacher Recruitment and Retention." She stated that teacher quality is perhaps the most important school-related factor in student learning. If a student has three weak teachers in a row, their chances of success in school are diminished.

Dr. Reed described some of the characteristics of Indiana's teaching force. The average age of a teacher is 44.2 years, and about 37% teach elementary school. She also stressed that a large percent of the teaching population, 26% to 46% depending on subject area, would be eligible to retire in the next five years. Teacher attrition is a concern. The turnover rate for schools has been about 10% per year the last four years, but the number of teachers leaving

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the profession in the first five years is about 50%. The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates the teachers' attrition costs for Indiana to be about \$73.3 M annually.

One measure of teacher shortage is the number of limited licenses and emergency permits the Department of Education issues. Between 2001 and 2006 the department issued 9,897 permits; 73% of the permits were for special education. For the 2006-07 school year, the department issued 2,075 permits with 933 of the permits for special education. Every school may experience shortage in some areas, but larger schools may experience shortages in all areas. If all the teachers eligible for retirement benefits retire, then all communities would probably experience shortages. What research tells is that top college graduates are less likely to go into teaching, attrition is most severe in the first five years of teaching, and compensation plays a key role in teacher retention.

Dr. Reed discussed the National Board Certification Program. Indiana has 179 people that have earned certification with 131 of the people currently teaching. Nineteen schools provide some incentives for teachers who earn National Board Certification. A recent Education Week article questioned the usefulness of incentives, including National Board Certification, to attract and retain teachers.

Dr. Reed discussed possible strategies to recruit and retain teachers. The strategies include incentives, comprehensive programs, extended contracts, teacher preparation, mentoring, and new data systems. She also discussed some of the current resources available for recruiting and retaining teachers. Two of the resources were the federal Teacher Quality Grant and the state Professional Development Grant. The committee asked for some additional information on the Teacher Quality Grant and other grants that might be available to attract and keep people in teaching.

Dr. John Ellis, Executive Director of the Indiana Association of School Superintendents, told the committee that superintendents had the same problem retaining new superintendents. There are about 23 to 25 new superintendents per year. He has tried to look at the reasons for departure, but it is difficult to locate the ex-superintendents to get a response. One person that he did contact responded that she had not understood the pressure she would be under as superintendent. The number of reports required of superintendents has increased due to the federal No Child Left Behind law. He did discover that at least five of the ex-superintendents did not participate in any professional development. Good mentoring and use of coaches help retain people. On professional development, Dr. Ellis stated that removing a teacher from the classroom to do professional development and using substitute teachers are not good procedures. Professional development needs to be tailored to teachers' needs. A lecture may not be the best media for professional development. Adults look for what they can use in the short term. Dr. Ellis said that Indiana's retirement system might be improved to retain staff. Retirement in other states might total about 70% replacement of salary, while in Indiana it is about 50%.

Sally Sloan, Executive Director of the Indiana Federation of Teachers, provided the committee with a copy of "Meeting the Challenge: Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Schools," <http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/h2s.pdf>. On page 3 of the report are school factors that draw teachers in or push them away:

- Student discipline problems and personal safety concerns
- Lack of on-site support and intervention for students experiencing learning difficulties
- Poor administrative leadership and support
- Unhealthy physical plant
- Lack of faculty influence on decisions that affect student learning

- Inadequate ongoing, job-embedded professional development and other supports
- Lack of students' academic success
- Inadequate time for planning, preparation, instruction
- Excessive classroom intrusions

The document also covers some successful and promising strategies to recruit and retain teachers. Mentoring or coaching is a huge factor in retaining teachers. The Beginning Teacher's Program needs to be properly funded and mentors properly trained. Time is a factor. The beginning teacher and mentor/coach have to be provided time outside of the classroom setting. Mrs. Sloan also mentioned that the removal of the limit that retired teachers can earn before their pensions are reduced helps with possible shortages, as well as "grow your own programs," where teacher aids or teachers in other teaching areas are given assistance in getting required licenses.

The committee asked if the attrition for teaching was different from other professions. Dr. Ellis stated that the Bureau of Labor makes projections and would provide the committee some information on the subject.

Dan Clark, Deputy Executive Director for Program for Indiana State Teachers Association, said that the ability to attract and retain teachers is different for schools with growing and declining enrollments. Suburban schools may be able to recruit teachers from the urban and rural schools. He suggested that the teachers in some teaching areas, such as social studies, might be granted broader licenses. A teacher in a rural area could then teach a variety of subjects in social sciences. He also stated that teachers in shortage areas should be paid more, but the additional pay should be for additional responsibilities or time at school. Mr. Clark stated that there are enough legal requirements to support quality teaching but there need to be more local innovation and action to implement the requirements. Professional development has been in state law for 25 years.

Kathy Smith-Andrew, a former teacher, told the committee that it is important to have people teaching who can relate to students. When she taught middle school, there were two math teachers who got A's in college but did not succeed in teaching because they never failed and could not relate to students who failed. Life experiences can be more important than a mastery of a subject. Teachers have to change the way material is presented if it is not understood the first time presented. She stated that teaching was the hardest job.

Senator David Ford spoke to the committee about the use of new technology in the classroom and how it can reinvigorate a teacher. Students do not learn the same now as they did 20 years ago, and we should not impose our education experience on future kids. Senator Ford invited the committee to visit schools to observe the use of technology. Some schools are doing great things with technology and could do more with increased funding.

The next meeting was set for September 13th at 1:00 P.M. The topics to be discussed are the additional discussion of teacher recruitment and retention and issues pertaining to juvenile education within the Department of Correction.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48.